

**Department of Environmental Conservation
Response to Comments**

For

Fairbanks Gold Mining, Incorporated

APDES Permit No. AK0053643

Public Noticed March 23, 2018 – April 23, 2018

April 30, 2018



**Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501**

1 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Facility / Permit

Fort Knox is owned and operated by Fairbanks Gold Mining, Inc. (FGMI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kinross Gold Corporation. Fort Knox, originally permitted for construction and operation in 1994, is an open-pit gold mine located approximately 26 miles northeast of Fairbanks on the north flank of Gilmore Dome. The mine is located along a belt of lode and placer deposits that comprise one of the highest gold-producing areas in Alaska. The area in and around Fort Knox has a long history of gold exploration and mining activities, dating back almost 100 years; the drainages surrounding Fort Knox were first prospected in 1913 (USGS 2001). Fort Knox processes ore onsite at a carbon-in-pulp mill with a daily capacity of up to 45,000 tons and produces approximately 300,000 to 350,000 ounces of gold annually. Site facilities include the active open pit mine, mill, tailings storage facility (TSF), constructed wetlands complex, freshwater reservoir, and the Walter Creek Valley heap leach facility.

Water from mining, processing, mill operations, and pit dewatering is routed to the TSF for reuse in mine operations. Wastewater consisting of seepage beneath the TSF dam captured by seepage pump-back and interceptor systems, TSF decant, mine drainage, and dewatering water is treated and discharged through outfall 001 to the Old Fish Creek Channel and outfall 002 to the North Channel. The freshwater reservoir receives inflows through precipitation and runoff from surrounding drainages (i.e. Last Chance Creek and Solo Creek), as well as the Old Fish Creek Channel, which receives flow from the North Channel, upstream of the reservoir.

1.2 Opportunities for Public Participation

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC or the Department) proposed to reissue an Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (APDES) wastewater discharge permit FGMI. To ensure public, agency, local governments and tribal notification and opportunities for participation, the Department:

- identified the permit on the annual Permit Issuance Plan posted online at:
<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wwdp/index.htm>
- notified local governments and potentially affected tribes that the Department would be working on this permit via letter, fax and/or email
- formally published public notice of the draft permit on March 23, 2018 in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner
- posted the draft of the permit online for a 32-day public comment period on March 23, 2018
- sent email notifications via the APDES Program List Serve when the draft and final permits were available for review

The Department did not receive any comments on the draft permit.

1.3 Final Permit

The final permit was reissued by the Department on April 30, 2018.